

Why is omega-3 so important?

No longer the bad guys, we now know that fats are absolutely *crucial for health* and there are particularly special types that can deliver **extraordinary benefits**.

Omega-3 fats, the ones you'll find in oily fish such as tuna, mackerel and salmon, have become the subject of extensive and ongoing research. Not a week goes by without another good reason to include more omega-3 in your diet. **They are helpful for virtually all aspects of health** including heart, brain, mood, joints, pain & inflammation, pregnancy, child development and may even help to support healthy gut bacteria too!

Why aren't we getting enough?

The typical Western diet is low in omega-3s (nuts, seeds, oily fish) and instead contains high amounts of omega-6 fats (meat, dairy, vegetable oils). **Omega-3 fats reduce inflammation, whilst omega-6 fats increase it.** Both types are needed in the diet and when consumed in an ideal ratio of 1:1, they can help to keep inflammation nicely balanced in the body. Unfortunately, the typical Western diet delivers an omega-6: omega-3 ratio closer to 20:1, so inflammation rages out of control and chronic health problems become the norm.



WHY YOU NEED OMEGA-3s

- ✓ **Heart health** – Way back in the early 1970s, two scientists, Bang & Dyerberg, noticed that despite eating a high fat diet, Greenland Eskimos had excellent cardiovascular health. They soon realised that the type of fat they were eating was very different to that normally found in a typical Western diet. They ate large quantities of oily fish and cold water marine animals, packed full of omega-3 fats. Omega-3s are now recommended for the primary and secondary prevention of cardiovascular disease.
- ✓ **Brain** – Omega-3s are essential for the structure and function of the brain. They are needed at every stage of life, from conception and throughout pregnancy to support a growing baby's brain, through childhood for learning and development, for balanced mood at any age and right through into older age to preserve cognitive function and protect the brain against life stresses.
- ✓ **Joints, pain & inflammation** – Multiple studies have found benefit in using omega-3-rich fish oil to support improved joint health, reduce pain, support immune balance and calm inflammation.
- ✓ **Child health** – Omega-3s are essential during the early years for brain, eye and nervous system development. Evidence suggests that omega-3s may be useful to support learning and behaviour and in problems such as autism (ASD) and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).
- ✓ **Gut bacteria** – Exciting early research has found that omega-3s may have an important role to play in supporting healthy gut bacteria.

Should I eat more oily fish?

Oily fish may well be the best dietary source of omega-3, but sadly also contains harmful pollutants such as heavy metals, toxins, plastic residues and PCBs. UK government guidelines recommend that you should eat at least one portion (140g cooked weight) of oily fish per week. Yet strong concerns over the high levels of pollutants mean that a maximum weekly level of 2 portions for pregnant women and 4 portions for everyone else has also been set.

The latest National Diet & Nutrition Survey shows that most people across all age groups fail to eat even one portion of oily fish per week. A thoroughly purified, stable omega-3 fish oil supplement is generally agreed to be a safer and more reliable way to up your daily intake.



did you know?

The evolving human brain tripled in size over 7 million years, yet much of this growth happened in the last 2 million.

Some scientists believe this accelerated brain change happened when early humans lived near water and began to eat more omega-3 rich fish and marine animals.

This increase in brain size and the associated ability to manage, store and compute information like never before is considered a crucial step in our evolution as human beings. Could omega-3s have started the big brain change?!

OMEGA-3 – *Best food sources*

- ✓ **Oily fish** - salmon, mackerel, herring, fresh tuna, trout, whitebait, sardines & anchovies
- ✓ **Walnuts**
- ✓ **Flax seeds**
- ✓ **Hemp seeds**
- ✓ **Chia seeds**

TOP TIPS FOR CHOOSING AN EFFECTIVE OMEGA-3 FISH OIL:

- ✓ **Pure** – Choose an omega-3 fish oil supplement that has been thoroughly purified to be free from harmful pollutants such as heavy metals, dioxins, PCBs and plastic residues.
- ✓ **Stable** – Many high quality supplements contain added antioxidants such as vitamin E to ensure freshness and stability, whilst cheaper products are often rancid and will do you more harm than good.
- ✓ **EPA & DHA** – Look for an oil that contains EPA & DHA – the omega-3 fats that are best studied for wide ranging health benefits.
- ✓ **Lifestyle** – The least effective product is the one you don't take, so make sure the product you choose fits your taste and lifestyle; this is especially important for children. Fish oil supplements are delivered in liquid, capsule and even chewy jelly forms so pick the one that fits seamlessly into your daily routine.

